

THE STATE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION IN MONTANA

REPORT OF THE
MONTANA STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON FOOD AND NUTRITION

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Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Wellness Park
Montana State Games - Summer
Nutrition education and counseling



Farmers' Market Nutrition Program consumers
at Bozeman Farmers' market



Children at Head Start making a pumpkin patch with
pumpkins provided to the Montana Food Bank Network
from a grower in Hamilton

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition is made up of representatives from public and private organizations throughout Montana. Although the Advisory Council is a Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Council, the collective voice of the Council makes recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on food and nutrition issues affecting Montanans.

The efforts of the groups represented by the Council seek to improve the nutritional status of residents and to increase food security in Montana. These efforts have resulted in the following:

- Disseminated the “Mind & Body” classroom-based physical activity curriculum to elementary schools.
- In 2001, developed the Montana’s Choice program to inform Montanans about the availability of fresh and locally grown products in grocery stores throughout the state.
- Completed the third year of funding and operation of the Senior Farmers’ Market Program. Due to interest by consumers and other markets wishing to participate, the program may pursue additional federal dollars
- Conducted a study in 15 supported living arrangements for adults with developmental disabilities in the five service regions in Montana. Results showed underutilization of public food and nutrition programs by qualified residents with disabilities. The research was conducted by the Research and Training Center of the Rural Institute on Disabilities at the University of Montana.
- In 2003, the Montana Legislature passed Senate Joint Resolution No. 2; A Resolution in Support of Healthy School Nutrition and Physical Activity Environments. This resolution calls on school districts to offer nutritious food and beverage choices and to provide opportunities for physical activity whenever possible.

Challenges still exist, however, to improve food security long term. There is a need to:

- Improve food safety standards across all spectrums of the food industry—from production to consumption.
- Prevent obesity through nutrition and physical activity strategies focusing on schools, communities and families.
- Continue efforts to provide stable funding sources to sustain the WIC and Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs and to increase the number of participating sites.
- Work closely with Montana’s Federal Delegation to assure prompt reauthorization of Child Nutrition Programs early in 2004.
- Encourage programs such as the Montana’s Choice program, Made In Montana/Grown In Montana program and other buy-local programs that strive to keep fresh and locally grown Montana products at the forefront of consumers’ minds.

~VISION~

The Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition will lead and facilitate the creation of an optimal food and nutrition environment for all Montanans.

MONTANA STATE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION

MONTANA STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON FOOD AND NUTRITION

CURRENT SITUATION

- As reported in the Food Research and Action Center's *State of the State's Profile*, 13.2 % of Montana households are food insecure. This total represents households with or without hunger. A household is considered food insecure when there is no assurance of where the next meal is coming from. Four percent of Montana households are reported food insecure with hunger. This means that the household does not have adequate food and goes without meals.
- 119,000 Montanans live in poverty. Of that number, 34,000 are children under the age of 18.
- Childhood and adult obesity is on the rise. Thirty-four percent of Montana adults are overweight and according to a statewide survey of our youth, Montana's high schoolers are less likely than U.S. teens to eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day.

PROGRESS

- Distributed *5 A Day Best Buys* to Farmers' Markets.
- Provided 5 A Day coloring books for WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program participants.
- Began a dialogue with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Quality Assurance Division regarding nutrition standards in Assisted Living homes.

- Redistributed a Farmers' Market Public Service Announcement with Governor Martz.
- Provided recommendations to our Federal Delegation on the Reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with the Governor's Office and the Montana Legislature to find ways to support food pantries and local charities as they strive to meet the increased need for food.
- Seek restoration of the Aging Services Funding to benefit Montana's elderly population.
- Work with the DPHHS to find realistic ways to promote nutrition and help improve the health status of residents in assisted living facilities.
- Increase participation in the Food Stamp Program through food stamp outreach and nutrition education.
- Prevent obesity through nutrition and physical activity strategies focusing on schools, communities and families.
- Collaborate with Montana anti-hunger groups to develop policies to reduce hunger and malnutrition.

MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK

CURRENT SITUATION

- Although Montana's food pantries are struggling to meet the demand for food, smaller pantries are starting up all across the state to add increased food and time resources into the food bank system.
- These smaller pantries fill the gap for households who need to visit a pantry more than once each month by opening alternate days and hours. Many of these new pantries are faith-based, and many are opening in areas where there had previously been no service.
- The number of Montana children served through food banks and on-site meal programs remained consistent at nearly 12% of Montana's population.
- 107,202 unduplicated Montana households utilized the services of a local food pantry in 2002.
- The CARE Act, a Federal bill that would level the playing field for farmers and ranchers to donate their unsaleable produce and meat to food banks, has been delayed in Congress. This bill would give small growers and retail establishments the same

tax break as currently enjoyed by large corporations donating food to food banks.

- Funding to support the operation of the Cannery was cut during the 2003 Montana Legislative Session. The Cannery has been operating at a reduced level since September 30, 2003.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- Provided over 3 million pounds of food to supplement local food pantries including 1 million pounds of Federal TEFAP Commodities in collaboration with the Food Distribution Bureau of the DPHHS.
- As Montana's only food bank affiliate of America's Second Harvest, the Montana Food Bank Network is working to secure additional sources of food for the state's food banks, including partnerships with General Mills and Pasta Montana.
- Through its partnership with Montana Department of Corrections; DPHHS; and the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the MFBN/MCE Cannery at Deer Lodge processed 23 different products including, soups, jellies, vegetables and fruits as well as repackaged dry cereal and pasta and processing and froze wild game meat.
- The MFBN approached Montana's Federal Delegates with a proposal to fund the Cannery at Montana State

Prison. Senator Conrad Burns proposed a \$400,000 appropriation for the Cannery in the Commerce, Justice and States Appropriation Bill. Senator Max Baucus proposed an earmark in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Appropriation Bill to support the Montana Food Bank Network's application for grant funding for the Cannery from the USDA.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with the Governor's Office and the Montana Legislature to find ways to support food pantries and local charities as they strive to meet the increased need for food.
- Collaborate with America's Second Harvest and other national groups to encourage passage of the CARE Act and other legislation vital to increasing donations to local charities.
- Encourage the Montana Legislature to continue its support for the Cannery Project at Montana State Prison.
- Work with the Montana Department of Agriculture to develop a program for farmers to add value to their products by allowing access to the MFBN/MCE Cannery for processing of product in Montana.

MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK ADVOCACY COUNCIL

CURRENT SITUATION

- During the past year, the number of Montanans needing access to food and nutrition services has increased. Average monthly participation in the Food Stamp Program went from 27,004 households in State Fiscal Year (FY) 2002 to 29,092 in State FY 2003 – an increase of 4%. Payments for food stamp recipients have increased slightly from an average of \$72/month at the close of FY01 to an average of \$76.19/month at the close of FY02.
- Congress delayed action to reauthorize Child Nutrition Programs (including the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs; the Women, Infants, and Children Program; the Child and Adult Care Food Program; the Afterschool Snack Program and the Summer Food Service Program). The Senate Agriculture Committee will take up the reauthorization of these programs in early 2004.

PROGRESS

- According to the 2003 Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) *State of the States Report*, Montana's School Breakfast Program moved from the participation ranking of 41st in the nation in the 2000-2001 school year to 31st in the following school year. In 2003, Montana maintained the 16th highest ranking in participation in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Montana participated in the Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium (WRAHC), which has prepared, and continues to advocate for, an approach to the 2003 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Bill. Key points include:
 - 1) Keep School Lunch the popular, user-friendly program that it currently is for children, families and schools. This is in direct reference to the

over-certification debate in DC. In Montana, error rates are minimal.

- 2) Help children learn by serving a school breakfast to every child. Montana advocates continue to work with local agencies to offer this program. In Montana, only 37.6% of low-income students participating in the school lunch program also participate in the school breakfast program. Studies show that academic performance and behavior in the classroom improve greatly when school breakfast programs are offered to students.
- 3) Serve more children food in the summer months and before and after school. This promotes the Summer Food Service Program, the Afterschool Snack Program, and the Supper Program.
- 4) Provide more very young children with healthy food through WIC. Scientific research is currently being conducted at the federal level to determine what changes need to be made to the WIC food package in relation to the child obesity trend seen in recent years.

- 5) Help prevent childhood obesity by providing access to healthful food and beverage choices throughout the school environment.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate with other advocacy groups in Montana at the local and state level, as well as the regional and national levels, to develop policies aimed at reducing the incidence and rate of hunger and malnutrition.
- Work closely with Montana's Federal Delegation to assure prompt reauthorization of Child Nutrition Programs early in 2004.
- Continue to foster the development of Community Nutrition Coalitions at the local level throughout Montana, increasing grassroots leadership, hunger awareness, and advocacy efforts.
- Continue to work with Community Nutrition Coalitions at the local level to increase access to food and nutrition through public and private food assistance programs.

MONTANA AMERICAN INDIANS

CURRENT SITUATION

- Montana American Indians who have diabetes are also at very high risk of a heart attack or stroke.

implementing a recess before lunch policy, and starting an incentive walking program.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- On the Blackfeet reservation, Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Southern Piegan Diabetes Project helped participants in two Well Women Stay Strong Nutrition and Exercise groups to decrease their body fat and improve their balance and strength. The Blackfeet Wellness Program and IHS provided five Health Watchers classes on healthy eating.
- The Rocky Boy reservation improved school food and beverage offerings (such as installing a salad bar and switching to 1% milk) and formed a Healthy School Team to implement changes pertaining to food service, health and physical activity, concessions, the student store, and curriculum.
- A team from the Crow reservation is implementing a plan that was developed at the Healthy School Summit conference. Schools are planning improvements including removal of pop machines,

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide adequate funding for quality health care and preventive health services for American Indians.
- Continue to support partnerships such as the Healthy School Summit to educate Indian communities about healthier school environments. Develop additional partnerships to foster this type of change.
- Continue to emphasize eating and exercise behavior changes to reduce the risk of chronic disease in American Indian people.
- Support existing programs that focus on nutrition and physical activity behavior change in order to improve the health outcomes of American Indians with chronic diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH (CVH) PROGRAM

CURRENT SITUATION

- According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, adult Montanans have become less active over the past decade.
- Collaborated with the Eat Right Montana nutrition and physical activity coalition to award 5 A Day mini-grants to community organizations.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- The CVH Program was awarded a competitive grant, which provides the funding and capacity to implement statewide activities in health promotion and the prevention and treatment of heart disease and stroke.
- Assisted Montana's larger hospitals in implementing the "Guidelines Applied in Practice" project to improve care of patients who have had a heart attack.
- Completed walkability surveys in Missoula and Kalispell to assess residents' perceptions of whether it is easy to walk and bike in their community.
- Provided start-up funds for community gardens on a Montana reservation.
- Partnered with the Office of Public Instruction to disseminate the "Mind & Body" classroom-based physical activity curriculum to elementary schools.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to promote fruit and vegetable intake by awarding mini-grants for 5 A Day and community gardens.
- Expand the "Guidelines Applied in Practice" project to smaller community hospitals.
- Continue to fund "Walk to School Day" events, and encourage regular walking or biking to school.
- Implement a worksite wellness project focusing on nutrition, physical activity, and awareness of the signs and symptoms of a heart attack.

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

CURRENT SITUATION

- As of October 2003, a total of 113 childcare centers participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). From April 2002 - April 2003, sponsored family day care homes on the CACFP decreased by 3.5 percent (from 1063 to 1026 homes). Total meals served from October 2002 through October 2003 declined 4% over the previous period to 8.2 million meals.
- Participation of childcare facilities decreased in the CACFP Program by 5.2 percent. These decreases reflect the impact of the economic climate and the childcare waitlist.
- By the end of FFY 2004, improve the nutritional status and program integrity of 13 sponsoring organizations by:
 - Presenting one nutrition-based training;
 - Monitoring 13 DCH Sponsor trainings of Providers;
 - Providing technical assistance on an as-needed basis; and
 - Presenting training on the topic of program integrity once for 13 sponsoring organizations with 25-30 participants.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- By the end of FFY 2004, the number of centers who meet the CACFP's recommended dietary guidelines will be defined. This will be accomplished by:
 - Completing a dietary analysis based on submitted center menus; and
 - Conducting a nutrient analysis of meals served

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Influence healthy lifestyle choices by facilitating program participation, funding nutritious meals and providing effective training.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CURRENT SITUATION

- The Montana Department of Agriculture's role in the state's food and nutrition is to make consumers aware of the availability of fresh and locally grown products for their consumption.
- While locally grown products are available statewide, a study of local consumers indicated that, in general, Montanans are generally unaware of which products are processed in the state and are available to them on a regular basis.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- The Montana's Choice program was developed in 2001 to inform Montanans about the availability of fresh and locally grown products in grocery stores throughout the state.
- In 2003, more than 40 stores participated in this program, utilizing product identifiers and in-store product sampling to notify customers of the

availability and location of the state's products on the shelves.

- Television and radio public service announcements were also run throughout the summer of 2003 to highlight the program and products.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage programs such as the Montana's Choice program, Made In Montana/Grown In Montana program and other buy-local programs that strive to keep fresh and locally grown Montana products at the forefront of consumers' minds.
- Conduct additional promotional events to highlight Montana products and encourage consumer sampling. Seek partnerships with local independent grocers and chains, in order to further increase the reach of these programs.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (FOOD STAMP PROGRAM)

CURRENT SITUATION

- The average number of households served per month increased from 27,404 for State Fiscal Year 2002 to 29,092 for State Fiscal Year 2003.
- USDA Food & Nutrition Service is increasing food security and reducing hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- Simplified reporting requirements were implemented for most households, and food stamp benefits were restored to legal eligible aliens from Farm Bill (H.R. 2646).
- Policy changed allowing households to apply for food stamp benefits at the Office of Public Assistance most convenient for them.
- Montana Access Cards (EBT) are now being manufactured in Montana allowing households to

receive EBT cards a day or two sooner.

- Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Silver Bow, and Yellowstone counties offer food stamp participants a free employment and training program. They can access: job counseling, current job information, training, referrals to community resources and supportive service dollars to assist in seeking employment through the Food Stamp Employment and Training program.
- Through the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) implemented by MSU Extension in 30 counties, provided education for food stamp participants to help them manage their food resources in a more effective, healthier way. FSNEP nutrition assistants with MSU Extension work with the Offices of Public Assistance and other agencies and organizations to reach a wide variety of food stamp participants in the communities. Evaluations show positive outcomes: more fruits and vegetables consumed, more cost-effective food shopping, and improved food safety practices.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop strategies to manage increasing participation rates and decreasing resources.
- Continue working with community partners to increase participation for eligible households by improving access and developing outreach strategies.
- Work toward high performance bonus money by improving payment accuracy, negative error rate, participation rate, and application timeliness.
- Support additional funding from state sources to expand FSNEP sites to counties and communities most at risk and those that are underserved.

AGING SERVICES

CURRENT SITUATION

- The Aging Network currently serves approximately 600,000 meals to about 7000 homebound elders in Montana each year. These meals are part of an array of senior services that allow elders to live independently in their own homes.
- The Aging Services budget was reduced by about \$250,000 in state general funds for each of the next two years of the biennium. The majority of these reductions will be taken in local home delivered meals programs because of their size and ability to sustain cuts. Reducing funds to other in-home services could seriously impact their viability or cause their elimination. Eligibility criteria for home delivered meals will likely become more stringent to ensure the most needy are served.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- The Senior Farmers' Market Program completed its third year of funding and operation. Due to interest by consumers and other markets wishing to participate, the program is looking at pursuing additional federal dollars.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pursue creative local options to supplement funding for home delivered meals.
- If other funding becomes available to the State, seek restoration of the Aging Services funding.

COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)

CURRENT SITUATION

- The Commodity Supplemental Food Program was started in June 2000 in Montana and is covering all areas of the state through fifty-nine distribution sites.
- The CSFP provides a monthly food package to individuals 60 years of age whose income is at or below 130% of poverty.
- This program also provides assistance to WIC eligible individuals not participating in that program.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- In federal fiscal year 2003 the CSFP increased the persons served under the program by 12% - in part due to a significant increase in eligible children ages 5-6 who are no longer on WIC.

POLICY/ ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to promote and increase CSFP participation through education and referrals.
- Work to increase distribution capabilities within existing sites and to add additional distribution sites.

FOOD SAFETY

CURRENT SITUATION

- Montana's businesses, communities, and families are increasingly recognizing the value of food safety. Montana's food businesses realize safe food policies and practices are imperative for success... "it can make or break your business," says one executive chef. Communities and families realize safe food

handling policies and practices can prevent foodborne illness and the accompanying costly health care bills and loss of wages. Recent concerns about biosecurity and the protection of our food supply has promoted utilizing a "food system" approach that considers ensuring safe food from production to consumption. Food safety plays a significant role in value-added agriculture with food safety training a critical component for developing new food products.

training to fulfill mandatory requirements and to further develop safe food standards to meet current food safety challenges. Montana HACCP Training Team includes professionals from Department of Livestock, Meat Inspection Division; MSU Extension Service; and the DPHHS Food and Consumer Safety Section.

- Safe Food During Disasters and Emergencies:

- Finding information to ensure a safe food supply during disasters and emergencies has become easier through the Montana Extension Disaster Education Network website www.montanahelp.org. This website brings up-to-date, Montana-specific emergency preparedness for food safety and many other issues for consumers, emergency response agencies, and educators.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- *"Starting a Specialty Food Business: Knowing What Questions to Ask and Where to Find the Answers* (Video and Resource Guide). Running a food business may be a profitable venture for Montana's farmers and entrepreneurs, and understanding food safety regulations and practices is imperative. To help, the Montana State University Extension Service has produced a video that will aid Montanans in tapping into "value added agriculture" food markets. The video was produced in collaboration with Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Department of Livestock, MSU College of Agriculture, Intertribal Agriculture Council, State and local sanitarians, and successful Montana food producers. The video and resource guide address startup, marketing and business development issues.
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Training:
 - HACCP food safety classes are offered to food processors and food service operators seeking

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote integration and increased financial support for food safety education and training within all segments of the food system.
- Encourage local communities to examine their food safety policies and practices to ensure standards of excellence in food safety.
- Promote development of a statewide strategic plan to identify and address critical food safety issues.

NUTRITION AND DISABILITY

CURRENT SITUATION

- 2001 and 2002 were the first years that the nutrition-related items on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System were analyzed to compare the behaviors of persons with and without disabilities. These important data will be used to describe nutrition behaviors and health disparities, as well as monitor changes as Montana's nutrition services and programs improve their accessibility to persons with disabilities.
- The Montana Disability and Health Program (MTDH) was created in 2002-03 with funding and support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of the MTDH program is to improve the overall health of Montanans with disabilities, and it has made specific progress in coordinating nutrition information and initiatives. MTDH partners include the Disability

Services Division, Senior and Long Term Care Division, and the Public Health and Safety Division of DPHHS; the Rural Institute on Disabilities, and an expanding network of public and private health services providers and disability-related groups.

PROGRESS (2002) FOLLOW-UP

- A study was conducted in 15 supported living arrangements for adults with developmental disabilities in the five service regions in Montana. Results showed underutilization of public food and nutrition programs by qualified residents with disabilities. The research was conducted by the Research and Training Center of the Rural

Institute on Disabilities at the University of Montana.

- Approximately 80 Montana adults with disabilities completed the health promotion course, Living Well with a Disability, in 2003. The eight-week workshop includes a nutrition module, which assists persons with disabilities to improve the healthfulness and safety of their diets.
- Nutrition education and awareness were objectives for the Healthy Eating booth at the Healthy Athletes Wellness Park at the Special Olympics State Games in May 2003. Over 350 athletes, coaches, family members, and personal assistants received services.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- More efforts are needed to adequately serve persons with disabilities in the public and private food and

nutrition programs in Montana in order to minimize participation barriers and to expand the outreach efforts of food and nutrition programs statewide. Priorities include making services, facilities, and materials more accessible to Montanans with a variety of disabilities.

- Increase participation in the development of nutrition standards and support materials for agencies and programs to better serve persons with disabilities.
- Explore avenues for gathering feedback from Montanans with disabilities on food and nutrition-related services problems, utilization, and needs.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing the rates of use of food programs, including food pantries, by adults and children with disabilities in the state.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU) EXTENSION INCLUDING EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

CURRENT SITUATION

- Approximately 70% of Montana adults do not eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. Approximately 18% of Montana adults are currently obese, with even more falling into the overweight category. Working families say they often sacrifice healthful eating in order to cope with demanding jobs and family schedules.
- Low-income and high-risk Montana families are particularly at risk if they make poor food and lifestyle choices. The rates of obesity and diabetes are higher, especially in some minority communities. Working families often try to balance more than one job per adult. Helping Montana low-income families choose a better diet while on a tight food budget pays long-term dividends.
- Montana children are increasingly impacted by advertising, which can influence at-risk behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, violence, and negative body image. Children can develop media literacy and critical thinking and action skills, which are imperative for healthy development.
- Teens make up a large percentage of the food service industry in Montana. Food safety training for teens is an important public health issue.

PROGRESS (2002) FOLLOW-UP

- Promoted health and fitness for people of all shapes and sizes through the Montana campaign, "Pathways to Health: Promoting Health, Fitness and Self-Esteem for People of All Ages, Shapes and Sizes." Educational efforts included the development of a video Get Real: Ads, Images and the Truth, development of a new website called "How Do You Do Dinner?", on-line classes, research and educational programs for teachers and health professionals. MSU Extension is one of many partners in the effort to promote positive body image, self-esteem, healthy eating and fitness.
- In 2002, Montanans participating in the nutrition education programs (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education) reported that over 91% of them improved food safety practices or food resource management practices. The assessment showed that participants showed positive behavior change in making healthy food choices, including eating more servings of fruits and vegetables. Food stamp recipients noted that food stamps and other food resources lasted longer in the month after lessons.
- Montana Food Safety Works is a food safety education job-training program targeted at high

school students. Through May 2003, 206 students from 11 high schools in Montana participated. Ninety-one percent of participants increased their confidence to work in a food service position. Pre- and post-test scores showed improvement in knowledge. All teachers involved are interested in conducting more Food Safety Works trainings. Food businesses recognize the value of training to students, resulting in higher wages and promotions. Valuable partnerships have been established among MSU Extension agents, Family and Consumer Sciences teachers, Health Department personnel, food service managers, and local food businesses.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- MSU Extension Service needs to continue to provide research-based information to Montanans in a coordinated, facilitated approach with other partners.
- Continue to support the nutrition education programs of MSU Extension Service to benefit even more Montanans.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

CURRENT SITUATION

- School Nutrition Programs administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction help ensure students' health and readiness to learn. These programs include the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Afterschool Snack, Special Milk, Summer Food Service, USDA Donated Foods and Team Nutrition.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- Participation in the School Breakfast Program in Montana continues to increase. The number of schools with breakfast programs increased from 522 to 554 during the 2003 school year (a 6% increase).
- Afterschool programs offer children supervised activities that are safe, fun and filled with learning opportunities. The number of schools participating in the Afterschool Snack Program remained constant during the 2003 school year at 100 schools.
- The Summer Food Service Program is a vital link in the defense against hunger and food insecurity among low-income children during the summer months. In 2003, the number of Montana sponsors increased 4% and number of sites increased 8%.
- The Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides fruits and vegetables to schools in Montana. Total state allocation increased from \$40,000 during the 2002 school year to more than \$252,000 during the 2003 school year (a 600% increase).
- In 2003, the Montana Legislature passed Senate Joint Resolution No. 2; A Resolution in Support of Healthy School Nutrition and Physical Activity Environments.

This resolution calls on school districts to offer nutritious food and beverage choices and provide opportunities for physical activity whenever possible.

- More than 50 schools in Montana have implemented a "Recess Before Lunch" policy and are experiencing positive results. Food waste is down, milk consumption is up, and the eating environment is quieter and more relaxed. Teachers and school administrators report that the children are better behaved on the playground and more "ready to learn" upon returning to the classroom.
- More than 20 schools have increased healthful food and beverage choices in their student run stores through a Team Nutrition project, Nutrition \$EN\$E. The schools report that students are purchasing the healthful items including bagels, granola bars, string cheese, yogurt, flavored milk, cheese and crackers.
- School Nutrition Programs received a 2003 USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant. This grant supports the Surgeon General's Call to Action to empower schools, childcare programs and communities to take action steps to help prevent or decrease the incidence of overweight and obesity in youth.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support Senate Joint Resolution Number 2 by implementing special training and education opportunities for schools. Help schools establish policies that support healthful school nutrition and physical activity environments.

- With the USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant, support the Healthy School Nutrition Environment Initiative to help schools establish policies that regulate foods sold in competition with school meals and provide a nutrition environment that gives students the skills, opportunities, and encouragement

they need to adopt healthy eating habits. Promotion efforts will focus on increasing availability of healthful foods and beverages in vending machines, student-run stores, and fundraising activities.

MONTANA SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

CURRENT SITUATION

- In State FY 2003, the average number of women, infants and children served per month at Montana WIC clinics was 21,099, which was slightly higher than the prior year.

PROGRESS (2002 FOLLOW-UP)

- The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) was applied for again this year. The total amount for the program was \$68,783 (including in-kind). The required match funds were not as prolific this year. General funds were not awarded again by the Legislature. The match was created from local cash contributions, Welch's non-solicited rebate and local in-kind contributions. Eight local agencies participated in the program. Women and children in WIC clinics were offered \$16 in FMNP checks to be used at authorized farmers' markets to purchase locally grown produce.
- A request was made for Operational Adjustment money to provide scholarships for two students to complete dietetic internships or to complete an American Dietetic Association-approved undergraduate degree in dietetics or nutrition. Because there were no applicants within local agency staff interested in completing a dietetic internship at this time, the funds were used to pay the tuition for 28 local agency staff to register and attend approved college-level nutrition classes via the internet at Santa Fe Community College. Books for the classes were also purchased with the funds. Improving local agency staffs' knowledge of nutrition will improve the quality of the nutrition education the WIC Program provides.

- Operational Adjustment funds were also requested to pilot projects at local agencies to make available electric breast pumps to breastfeeding women meeting established criteria. Ten local agencies were selected to participate in the pilots. One hundred and five electric breast pumps were available for the pilot program. Pilot sites will evaluate breastfeeding duration rates following the end of the pilot phase of the program.

POLICY/ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to pursue other funding sources for the required match to apply for a subsequent WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program grant.
- Request Operational Adjustment funds to:
 - Provide scholarships for dietetic internships or tuition and books for local agency staff to attend approved college-level nutrition classes;
 - Utilize additional food dollars to purchase electric breastpumps, rent electric breastpumps as well as purchase manual breastpumps.
- Review and respond, if necessary, to the USDA solicitation for public comment on redesigning the WIC food packages to determine if the packages should be revised to better improve the nutrition intake, health, and development of participants and, if so, what specific changes should be made.



A sampling of Made In Montana Products

2003 FOOD & NUTRITION AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Advisory Council recognized the following individuals for their work to improve the health of Montanans and to eliminate hunger.

- Kim Anderson, principal at Whitefish Central School in Whitefish, for his strong commitment to improving students' access to healthful foods and beverages.
- Diane Grant of Ronan, nutrition assistant with the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, for her creative work in promoting healthy lifestyles in Lake County.
- Senator Don Ryan of Great Falls for his leadership in sponsoring the 2003 Montana Legislature Senate Joint Resolution 2, which promotes a healthy school nutrition and physical activity environment.
- Lynne Keenan, Food Service Manager in Browning, for her outstanding efforts to ensure that children receive nutritious meals through the Summer Food Service Program for Browning Public Schools.
- Kathy Dunks, Manager of the Day Treatment Program at Silver House in Butte, for her dedication to ensure clients' nutritional needs are met.
- Bonnie Gebhardt, RD, of White Sulphur Springs for her exceptional efforts to meet the food and nutritional needs of Meagher County residents through her involvement with the county Nutrition Coalition.
- Sandy Baden of Lewistown for her commitment to providing nutrition education in Fergus, Petroleum and Judith Basin Counties through her work with the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.
- Jackie Cenis, certified lactation consultant in Hamilton, for her tireless efforts to promote breastfeeding in Missoula and Ravalli Counties.
- Nancy and Dale Forbes of Great Falls for their efforts to establish and sustain the Great Falls Community Food Bank.
- Jenny Rygg and the Nutrition \$EN\$E project students from East Middle School in Great Falls for their efforts to operate a student-run store that sells nutritious snacks and beverages.

The following organizations were recognized:

- Department of Corrections for its proactive efforts in implementing department-wide nutrition standards that meet national guidelines.
- Richland County Nutrition Coalition and the Sidney Health Center for their creative Tasty Fork collaboration with local restaurants, which offers low-fat menu options that may help reduce heart disease in Richland County.
- Indian Health Service and MSU Extension for their efforts to ensure that all food service operations on the Crow Reservation received food safety training. Special recognition was given to Debbie Haines, Indian Health Service Sanitarian, and Laurie Lutt, Big Horn County MSU Extension Family and Consumer Science Agent.



A sampling of Made In Montana Products

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